

Discussion of Jack Ruby's lie detector test
(reference from debate with David Belin, Nov. 23, 1976)

" Belin was a former counsel for the Warren Commission and later was the man who actually ran the Rockefeller Commission. It was a _____ to the debate.... and we had more or less in the form of ground rules....that we would not talk about the John Kennedy Assassination. And I'm the only one who didn't. Belin also did. He specifically talked about the lie detector test that was administered to Jack Ruby. when a student-- and most of the people at the dinner were students-- asked a question. Now this was not Belin's area of work on the Warren Commission; Belin's area of work, which he shared with Joe Ball,-- Belin being of the right and Ball being of the so-called left--had to do with identifying the so-called assassin. Now there is no way in which Jack Ruby was involved in this aspect of the work. Yet Belin just babbled about how from the very beginning he wanted a lie detector test of Jack Ruby. He said he had found universal opposition, especially from Earl Warren, and that all the lawyers insisted that it would be improper with Ruby about to be tried. He said he enlisted the aid of the rabbi, Ruby's rabbi,-his name was Hil something, I've forgotten his name but I know it-, and that he did not succeed in getting the commission to agree to a lie detector test of Jack Ruby until after Ruby's conviction. But that during all of this time, he, David Belin, a lawyer- who knew better, pressed in every way he could to have Ruby subjected to a lie detector test, knowing that Ruby's lawyers opposed it. Now I can't think of anything legally more improper, even though I'm not a lawyer.

Ruby's rights did not expire when he was convicted. There was an immediate and successful appeal, Ruby died with a new trial pending. But Belin said that as of the time Ruby was convicted he was able to persuade the commission to agree to a lie detector test of Jack Ruby.

I then asked him-- and I would just listen to most of this-- but why was Arlen Specter, (who's field was the medical evidence), selected to supervise this. And Belin's explanation is that Specter just happened to be in Dallas at the time. Well I'm not at all sure this is a credible story. Because the Warren Commission wasn't that worried about moving its lawyers around, and they weren't that concerned about saving plane fares. So you have the man in charge of the lie detector operation for the Warren Commission, a man who was not an expert on the Ruby end of it. The men who were experts on the Ruby end were Burt Griffin, who is now a judge in Cleveland and has said there should be a new investigation, and Leon Hubert, who is a professor of law at Tulane University. About the time that the lie detector test was administered to Ruby, which was long before the end of the Commission's life, for reasons Belin could not explain to me when I asked him, Leon Hubert, a former District Attorney in New Orleans, resigned from the Warren Commission. It happened at about June, now this is not at the time when you quit a job to assume a professorship at a University. That happens in the fall. You don't quit in the summertime, when colleges are not in session, to start teaching law at a University, where colleges start in September. So there is an element of mystery in this and I suspect-- there was a time when Hubert was going to talk to me and then he changed his mind-- my suspicion is that Hubert, as a lawyer, was outraged at the legal impropriety of the entire thing. You see a new trial had been ordered for Jack Ruby. Jack Ruby did have lawyers. You may remember this, he didn't pay any attention to his own lawyers during that lie detector test. The man he listened to was Bill Alexander, who was an assistant D.A., and as assistant D.A.s go a fairly responsible man. In case you didn't know it, the reason he was fired by Henry Wade had nothing to do with what Bill Alexander was saying about Earl Warren. It was because Bill Alexander pulled a pistol on the criminal defendant in Henry Wade's office, with the man there

with his lawyer for a conference with Henry Wade. Bill Alexander walks in and says "You son of a bitch I ought to put a bullet in your head right now". Now that was the kind of thing not to many district attorneys could put up with. That was the real reason Bill Alexander was fired, it had nothing to do with his political beliefs which were pretty far to the right.

Now I want to tell you about this part, and I want to make a record for my own information in the future of this part of the lie detector test which is not known. Now just as a matter because I have no notes on this, Allen Sweatt told me the lie detector test was administered in his lie detector room in the Dallas county sheriff's office, that he was forced out by Arlen Specter. Sweatt's comment was when he left the room "When I leave there isn't going to be anyone in here who knows what the hell he's doing." He told me that there were two FBI agents who administered the test who had had no experience and two weeks of training only. And up to that point to the best of his knowledge, J. Edgar Hoover had not been in favor of the lie detector test.

As of the time of the administration of this test, it was not proper and it was not legally acceptable to give a lie detector test over the objection of the defense counsel. But in the case of Jack Ruby, his defense counsel did object. The Warren Commission under the pressure of David Belin and even with the supreme court chief justice involved did in fact administer a so-called lie detector test. Which is hardly a model of what a lie detector test should be. The point is I want to make a record that the fact is--It was improper at the time it was done."

HW/ejs